

January 5, 1984

LB 49

of Nebraska and within five years in 1944 this state became the first and only state in the country to have completely publicly owned all of our electrical generating facilities. This state decided to take a very important step in those years, a very bold step and we are now again the only state in the country with public power. Now I thought that that concept made a lot of sense in 1933. It makes a lot of sense in 1983. But the sort of proposal that Senator Goodrich is bringing to you today is in fact again a chipping away of the concept of public power instead of private power. What is being proposed here is in fact a pretty ridiculous set of name changes, resume building, names that are attached to the different authority figures within public power, and it may seem silly and minute but it is this sort of thing that adds up to the subtle changes that undergird the system that we have in public power or any other institution and eventually wear away that footing and that foundation that we have built all these years upon and which I think will eventually erode. What I am talking about is this. What he is proposing is that instead of the president of a power district, a public power district, being the chairman of the board, that is the elected chairman of the board, elected by the public. Instead of that individual being the president, the head of that power district, the head of the power district would in fact become the general manager, the person that was selected, not elected, to serve in that capacity. That is a subtle change and it is a small change. It was the sort of change in 1984 and I am talking now of the book by George Orwell talked about with the newspeak concept. He said and at that time it was pretty bold and that was again many years ago, that the way you use the English language adds up to a very important perceptual change in the public. The language you use to describe yourself, to describe others, to describe the things that you do, make a difference in the way the public perceives yourself, others and the things that you do. So when we change the designation of president from the elected head of a power district, public power district, to the person hired to be the general manager of that public power district, it is more than just a subtle change. It is in fact another 1984 example coming our way of how we erode the English language, the sort of things that we hold near

6110